

Fuel Management by the USFS in Bannock County

General Overview of Lands:

Forest ecological types of the Caribou-Targhee National Forest have been classified and mapped using a hierarchical system that stratifies ecological units into progressively smaller units of increasingly uniform ecological potentials. The Forest boundary falls within seven ecological subsections. Land managed by the Caribou-Targhee National Forest within Bannock County are described and listed below.

BASIN AND RANGE TRANSITIONAL MOUNTAINS SUBSECTION

Location: Portneuf River Basin of southeast Idaho

The Basin and Range Transitional Mountains subsection consists of the Bannock and Malad Mountain Ranges of Paleozoic aged sedimentary and volcanic rock, such as limestone, dolomite, siltstone, conglomerate, sandstone, and volcanic materials, that have been modified by fluvial, colluvial and residual geomorphic processes. Elevations range from 5,000 to 9,095 feet (1,524 to 1,091 meters). Slopes range from 30 to 70 percent. The major vegetation types include coniferous forest and shrublands. This map unit is separated from similar subsections based upon the transitional characteristics of the Basin and Range geomorphic features. Climate is more moist and cooler than surrounding subsections.

Mean annual precipitation ranges from 18 inches (46 cm) at the lowest elevations to 30 inches (76 cm) at the highest elevations. Most precipitation occurs in the winter and spring with most of the precipitation falling as snow. The mean annual air temperature is 29 to 38 degrees F (-1.7 to 3.3 degrees C).

Live streams typically occur in the major drainageways and canyons. The landscape is slightly to moderately dissected. The natural disturbance processes are fire, insects, disease, windthrow and some flooding in the drainageways. Some gully erosion has occurred in the lower foothill draws and drainageways. Human-caused disturbances include roads, logging, mining and grazing. Mining of perlite and pumice occurs near Wright Creek.

Landscape Settings: mountains and narrow valleys

The mountain ranges are located on high elevation sites with slopes ranging from 30 to 70 percent. These landscapes include mountain slopes and ridges that are formed in sedimentary parent materials. Soils are shallow (less than 20 inches) to deep (40 to 60 inches) and well drained. Surface textures are loam and silt loam. Soils are classified as Pachic Cryoborolls and Argic Cryoborolls associated with sagebrush/maple potential natural vegetation, and Argic Pachic Cryoborolls associated with Douglas-fir potential natural vegetation.

The narrow valleys are located on mid-elevation sites with slopes ranging from 5 to 20 percent. These landscapes include narrow canyons and valleys that are formed in sedimentary parent materials. Soils are deep (40 to 60 inches) to very deep (greater than 60 inches) and well to

somewhat poorly drained. Surface texture are loam or sandy loam. Soils are classified as Cumulic Cryoborolls and Pachic Cryoborolls associated with willow/sedge and sagebrush potential natural vegetation.

Landtype Associations

Pocatello Foothills, Toeslopes and Canyons/Sagebrush Steppe

Pocatello Ridglands, Mountain Sideslopes and Canyons/Douglas-Fir Forest and Sagebrush Steppe

Elk Meadows Uplands, Basins and Mountain Sideslopes/Douglas-Fir Forest and Sagebrush Steppe

Malad Range Foothills and Toeslopes/Sagebrush-Mountain Mahogany-Juniper

Malad Range Canyon Sideslopes and Dissected Foothills/Sagebrush-Juniper-Douglas-fir

Malad Range Stable Uplands, Basins and Mountain Sideslopes/Sagebrush-Aspen-Mountain Mahogany-Douglas-fir

Elkhorn-Oxford Mountain Sideslopes and Ridglands/Sagebrush-Douglas-fir-Bigtooth Maple-Juniper-Aspen

Management Emphasis

Through prescription area application, the following will be emphasized within this subsection. This does not preclude other activities but with limited resources, management would be focused in these areas.

- °Wildland fire use, particularly in the Deep Creek/Clarkston, Oxford and Elkhorn areas
- °Wildland/Urban Interface fuel reduction projects in the foothills near Pocatello and other high risk areas
- °Maintenance and improvement of winter habitat for mule deer, particularly in the mountains west of Malad
- °Management of existing recreational residences in the Mink Creek area near Pocatello
- °Restoration of deteriorated rangelands, particularly in the southern half of the subsection
- °Restoration and protection of Yellowstone cutthroat trout strongholds, particularly in the Mink Creek area
- °Retention of roaded natural and semi-primitive recreation opportunities near the urban center of Pocatello
- °Tribal Trust responsibilities and coordination adjacent to the Shoshone-Bannock Reservation

General Overview of Caribou Forest Management Direction of Fire Management

Desired Future Conditions

- °Fuel management strategies are coordinated with adjacent landowners to reduce risk to life and loss of property from wildfire.
- °Fire use, both prescribed fire and wildland fire use, enhances ecosystem integrity and resiliency, and maintains desired fuel levels.
- °Wildland fire operates within historic fire regimes appropriate for the vegetation and site.

Goals

- °Forest resources are managed in accordance with the National Fire Plan, Ten-Year Comprehensive Strategy and Implementation Plan, and Cohesive Strategy to improve fire prevention and suppression, assist rural communities, reduce hazardous fuels, and restore fire-adapted ecosystems.
- °Fire is allowed to play its natural role where appropriate and desirable to reduce the risk of uncharacteristic wildland fires.
- °Fire and other management activities restore or maintain desirable vegetative communities and ecosystem processes. Fire management prescriptions are written to take advantage of natural lightning starts and to restore historical fire regimes.
- °Fire and other management activities are used to treat natural and activity fuels with priority on reducing risk from uncharacteristically large or intense wildland fires and protecting communities in the wildland-urban interface.

Objectives

- °Develop and implement at least one wildland fire use plan each year at the subsection scale. Priority should be given to the ecological subsections where this activity is emphasized.
 - °Within 1 year of signing the ROD, develop and begin implementation of a prioritized strategy for wildland/urban interface projects in the ecological subsections where this activity is emphasized.



Standard



fires shall be suppressed if they are in areas not covered by a pre-approved fire management plan.

Guidelines

- °Prescribed and wildland fire use is allowed and encouraged unless prohibited by individual prescription area direction.
- °When developing vegetation treatment projects, give priority to those reducing fuels in the wildland/urban interface. Strive to move vegetation currently in Fire Condition Class 3 to Condition Classes 1 and 2.
- °When developing wildland fire use plans, consider noxious weed infestations when determining which areas to allow wildland fire use.

General Overview of Fuels Management Projects:

The Westside Ranger District is actively managing wildland fuel both in and out of the wildland urban interface in Bannock County. Several projects have been completed (Gibson-Slate Prescribed Burns I, II, III), several projects are underway (Gibson-Slate Prescribed Burns IV, V, VI, Kinney Creek and Scout Mountain) and several more projects are in the planning phase (Portneuf Westbench Fuels Management Project).

We are using prescribed fire and mechanical treatments to manage fuel loadings. We are also working with Idaho Department of Lands, the Bureau of Land Management, and Gateway

Interagency Fire front and local landowners to coordinate efforts and resources for effective management of the wildland fuels situation in Bannock County

Map of Project areas within Bannock County:

See attached map

Past, Present and Future Fuels Management Projects.

PROJECT NAME	TYPE OF WORK	ACRES	YEAR COMPLETE
Gibson-Slate I	RX Burn	100	2000
Gibson-Slate II	RX Burn	100	2001
Gibson-Slate III	RX Burn	100	2002
Gibson-Slate IV	RX Burn	100	2004
Gibson-Slate V	RX Burn	100	2004
Gibson-Slate VI	RX Burn	100	2004
Kinney Creek	Mechanical	75	2003
Scout Mountain	Mechanical	75	2004
Summit	Mechanical	50	2004
Gibson Jack Trail I	Mechanical	50	*2004
Gibson Jack	RX Burn	470	*2004
Mud Springs	RX Burn	100	*2004
Bighorn	RX Burn	25	*2004
Dry Creek	RX Burn	65	*2004
Mink Creek	RX Burns	45	*2005
Gibson Jack Fence	Mechanical	15	*2006
Watershed Road	Mechanical	90	*2006
Wild Horse Mtn.	RX Burn	306	*2006
Gibson Jack Trail II	Mechanical	45	*2007

*NEPA decision pending